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## Lesser-known signs of being a Rhode Islander

I see them squeezed into driveways from time to time around the state, and it always leaves me wondering:

"How could someone in a house that small own a boat that big?"

It's a common enough sight, which got me thinking about other Rhode Island things that are common enough.

I don't mean obvious local traits, like referring to political fundraisers as "a time,"

spaghetti sauce as "a gravy" and dry cleaners as "cleansas." Not to mention loving vanity plates. Or should I say, "tags."

I'm talking about quirks that are less blatant but still part of the culture — like big boats by small houses.

So today, here are some lesser-known signs of being a Rhode Islander:

- You've tried out to be an extra.
- You're still traumatized by the traffic

that day on Mineral Spring Avenue.

■ Despite years of visiting Providence Place, you're still not sure where each exit will spit you out until you see the light of day.

■ As angry as you are at violent criminals, what really steams you are people who abuse dogs or cut down a copper beach

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■ Though you are now a Bank of America customer, you use Fleet checks because you're three mergers behind the times.

■ You bring home a cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee and drink it next to your coffee maker.

■ You have your elementary kids trained in sports camps run by top Division-1 college coaches.

■ And take it for granted.

■ You have age-old Newport bridge tokens in your glove compartment, because you keep forgetting and paying \$2 instead.

■ Only you call it a glove "box."

■ You fly to Baltimore with your kid to watch a major league ball game because even with airfare, it's cheaper than buying Red Sox tickets.

■ You've been on it maybe 100 times but have never driven Route 295 end to end.

■ You still wonder about that whole "land beyond Attleboro" where Rhode Island-focused families live when one spouse works in Boston.

■ You decry what big box stores have done to independent retailing, but you shop there anyway.

■ And go to cruise nights in their parking lots.

■ Though tourists build vacations around them, you take for granted things like beaches in summer and red leaves in fall.

■ You leave the state and return without realizing you've done so.

■ You wonder just where Warwick's downtown is.

■ You have 13 pair of outgrown youth skates in your garage.

■ You covet a cabana.

■ You feel guilty about putting a recycling bin out on a rainy night with no cover.

■ The only part of Jamestown you've ever driven on is the route between the bridges.

■ You know a man named Sal.

■ You drive for miles not sure whether you're on Douglas Avenue or Admiral Street because they only put signs on cross streets.

■ When someone mentions, "The Boulevard," you know which one they mean.

■ You browse those unclaimed property inserts like a gossip sheet looking for familiar names.

■ You always seem to have a pile of those CVS receipt-coupons sitting around that you plan to use "soon" though you know you

won't.

■ You've wanted to check out the Foxy Lady but are afraid if you had a heart attack your obit would mention where it happened.

■ You've wondered how people deal with living right next to Route 95.

■ You own a second home a half hour from your first.

■ You know someone with a restored classic car in their oversized garage.

■ You're still not sure if there's a difference between cherrystones and little necks.

■ Hate the legislature; love your rep.

■ Love your rep; forgive the corruption.

■ You know that 90 percent of nonprofit fundraising comes from the same 250 people ...

■ ... many of whom own manufacturing operations in Pawtucket or Fall River.

■ You boast of having passed a dozen movie-equipment trucks at an on-location set, though you have no idea what show it's for.

■ Your second biggest bill is for property taxes, which

pay for public schools; your first biggest is tuition for private school.

■ You regard car dealers as celebrities.

■ You buy the paper for the obits and high school scores.

■ After 20 years, you still can't decide whether the best route from Providence to Newport is through Fall River or over the bridges.

■ You're not Italian, but can cuss in it.

■ You're still confused how to dress for watching youth hockey on 90-degree summer days: shorts, too cold inside even with parka; long pants, too warm outside even with parka off.

And finally, there's this conundrum:

Even though you've been driving past the construction site for years, you have no clue how the Route 195 relocation's going to connect up.

As always, let me know if I missed some.

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